

# Proposed gallery: Suggested for Goulbourn Recreation Complex, to expose community members to local artwork

by Cheryl Brink  
The Stittsville News

One thousand square feet is all they are asking for.

A committee of artists working to bring a gallery to Stittsville believes such a designated space will bring new culture to the community.

The GRC Gallery X steering committee is made up of five local artists and the president of Nepean's Foyer Gallery, Terry Sametz. Members include Sue Perley-Robertson, Gerald Smith, John Madden, Beverly Ashford and Louise Parker.

As part of the Goulbourn Recreation Complex (GRC) expansion which is now underway, the committee hopes an area can be set aside for visual arts. They have already gathered support from city of Ottawa Stittsville-Kanata West ward councillor Shad Qadri, local community associations and art organizations. The official proposal has been sent to city staff, so the group is now waiting for feedback before proceeding.

"We know there is a need," said Mr. Sametz, chair of the committee. "We want a city that exposes the arts."

Ms. Perley-Robertson agreed.

"This is what is lacking in our community," the committee co-chair said. "We don't have this service; it's a necessity. It adds culture to the community."

She said the goal is to have a space very similar to the Foyer Gallery which is

inside the main lobby of the Nepean Sportsplex. The layout and location is the model for a Stittsville gallery in the expanded Goulbourn Recreation Complex

Mr. Sametz said partnering with a recreation centre is ideal as young people and families can be exposed to the arts while attending tournaments and practices.

The GRC expansion program manager, Rebecca Luhn-Jensen, said though a gallery was not part of the initial plan for the centre she thinks that it would be a good addition.

"It could definitely fit with an expanded lobby space," she said, adding that the high volume of traffic from the community would be a plus. She said the city's discussions are still preliminary and the budget is fairly tight but she also recognized the need for more arts and culture programs in the area.

An advantage to a community-based gallery – like the Foyer and Kanata Civic Art Gallery – over a commercial one is that members staff the facility so the city does not have to worry about staff.

Mr. Sametz said the Foyer has about 32 artists who rotate showing their work and keeping the space open by acting as "tour guides" for the public.

Stittsville artist Gerald Smith, who is part of the committee and a member of the Foyer Gallery, said it is not just because his paintings are on display that he works at the Nepean gallery but also because he enjoys



Stittsville artist Gerald Smith, left, and Terry Sametz, right, who is president of the Foyer Gallery in Nepean, stand in the Foyer Gallery which is the model for a Stittsville art gallery proposal. Both are members of a

steering committee that is working with city of Ottawa officials to have art gallery space included in the expansion of the Goulbourn Recreation Complex which is now underway.  
Photo by Cheryl Brink

interacting with the various artists and community members.

"It's our duty to share our time and enthusiasm in keeping it open," he said. "It's a gain for the city."

Mr. Sametz agreed that it is a positive affiliation for the city of Ottawa because the artists have a location and the city does not have to pay for an extra building or new employees.

Mr. Sametz said that

because the gallery is not commercial, artists have more freedom to display what they want. In his interactions with other organizations that were solely focused on selling, Mr. Sametz said they were only interested in a few of his pieces.

He said the Stittsville gallery will be like the Foyer Gallery in allowing artists to include politic statements or any message in their work

without worrying about how easily it will sell.

Artists will be approved as members of the gallery through a peer jury process, Mr. Sametz added.

Mr. Smith said the goal is to have 30 Ottawa-area artists become members of the Stittsville gallery.

A name for the space has not been decided; Ms. Perley-Robertson said she is unsure if the city or the committee will ultimately

be responsible for choosing a title.

She added that the aim is to have a gallery by 2010 but said the group would be content with just one wall to begin with to expose their work to the community.

"The gallery is for the artists, but it's also more for the residents," said Ms. Perley-Robertson. "People think they have to have money to buy art or understand art, but you don't."

## Postcard campaign for more funding

The Granite Ridge long term care facility in Stittsville wants to see more funding from the province for such facilities.

Indeed, the price tag for this extra funding has been set at \$513 million, funds which will provide the extra staff and supplies which such facilities require if they are to fully meet the needs of their residents.

To get this message across, Granite Ridge is participating with other similar facilities across the province in a postcard-writing campaign to local MPP's, delivering the urgent but simple message that increased funding for long term care facilities must be included in the province's 2008 budget.

In recent years, long term care facilities such as the Granite Ridge facility have received increased provincial government funding but mostly it has been funding to maintain already unacceptable levels of service or funding to improve just one aspect of the care such as food.

In the view of Norm Slatter, the administrator of the Granite Ridge long term care facility, there has to be a wide ranging infusion of increased funding for long term care facilities across the province.

"We are talking about the extra staff we need so residents aren't rushed to get to their meals, to provide more programs and activities during the evening or on weekends and to prepare meals that meet the increasing need for specialized diets," Mr. Slatter commented. He notes that 80 percent of long term care facility residents are affected by incontinence and yet there has been no increase in funding for incontinence products for the past five years. In addition, costs related to other expenses such as housekeeping and maintenance have increased far faster than any funding increases over the past four years.

The postcard campaign in which Granite Ridge, along with other Ontario Long Term Care Association member homes, is involved is provid-

ing residents, their families, staff and others with the opportunity to express their support for increased funding for long term care facilities by signing a postcard which will be delivered to the local MPP. In the case of the Granite Ridge long term care facility, this is longtime MPP Norm Sterling who now represents the Carleton-Mississippi Mills riding.

"We are telling our elected representatives that long term care needs more than a band aid in the 2008 provincial budget," Mr. Slatter said. What is needed, he pointed out, is widespread increased funding that will end up making a real difference in the lives of the residents of long term care facilities.

The Granite Ridge long term care facility provides care and services to 224 residents. It has been open for five years. The Ontario Long Term Care Association represents the operators of 430 long term care homes in the province which provide care and services to about 50,000 residents.

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